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Evaluation of the Civic Engagement Initiative, 2003-2004

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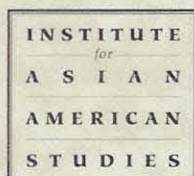
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EVALUATION OF THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE 2003-2004



Prepared for The Boston Foundation by

The Institute for Asian American Studies

The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino
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The William Monroe Trotter Institute for the
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I. Introduction

The Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI) began in 2002 as a major effort to increase voter engagement in neighborhoods and among constituencies that have historically low participation. At the same time, the CEI has strived to build the capacity of organizations it works with to make significant progress in achieving their broader goals.¹ It is based on the premise that promoting civic engagement through increased voter registration and turnout is both a fundamental component of effective urban organizing and a vehicle for strengthening organizations and communities. The CEI, therefore, supports locally based organizations advancing issues constituents care about. These organizations understand the dynamics within the communities they serve and are most likely to achieve significant and sustained increases in civic engagement over time.

The CEI is led by the Boston Foundation (TBF) as a funding collaborative with the financial support of the Hyams Foundation, Access Strategies Fund, the Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation, Common Stream, and the New Communities Fund. In early 2005, TBF, on behalf of the funders collaborative, commissioned the University of Massachusetts Boston's three ethnic institutes, the Institute for Asian American Studies, the Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, and the William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black History and Culture to conduct an evaluation of the CEI in its second and third years.

Evaluation Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the impact of the Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI) during 2003-2004 on:

- voter registration and turnout in the targeted communities
- additional products related to the CEI, including a) newspaper coverage of the CEI and voter registration and turnout activities, and b) the encouragement of persons of color to seek elected offices
- grantee organizations with particular emphasis on their ability to effectively incorporate and sustain the civic engagement work

After summarizing findings in each of these areas, observations and recommendations aimed at strengthening the CEI are provided.

¹ There are several projects that are currently or have recently been undertaken in communities throughout the United States to encourage civic engagement. They focus on promoting activities such as electoral participation and other pursuits including community service, community advocacy, forums and deliberations, etc. Appendix A contains brief descriptions of a small sample of these programs.

Methodology and Data

The CEI integrated high levels of data collection, use, and analysis into its implementation model. TBF and members of the coordinating team also conducted evaluative and summary research at different periods throughout the project. To assess the CEI's impact on voter participation, therefore, the evaluation team reviewed analyses by these stakeholders, including primarily data from the Massachusetts Voter Education Network (MassVOTE, January 2005), LeLievre Information Systems (March 2004; May 2005,) and Northeast Action (June 2003); reports to the funders group by the donor collaborative liaison Bates Consulting (March 2004; various dates 2005); an evaluative report to TBF by the foundation's own research associate (2004); and assorted work plans and reports from the grantees.

The team also assessed methodologies used in data collection. In certain cases, such as the review of the use of control precincts to assess project impact, the team analyzed raw data provided by the technical assistance providers together with neighborhood demographic information.

To determine the nature and scope of additional products related to increased voter turnout, the team reviewed newspaper coverage of the CEI and voter participation in the target neighborhoods by consulting several indexes and examining media files of some of the grantees. Boston candidate lists were scrutinized for data on the number of candidates of color and females present in 2002-2005 contested preliminary elections.

To help assess the impact of the CEI on the grantee organizations, the evaluation team conducted interviews with all but one of the grantee organizations; members of the coordinating committee including MassVOTE and the Commonwealth Coalition; the donor collaborative liaison, Bates Consulting; and technical assistance provider LeLievre Information Services. Interviews were also conducted with two organizations involved in voter mobilization in communities of color that were *not* grantees. In most cases interviews were done on an individual basis, however, in a few cases, multiple representatives of these organizations participated. The interview protocol is included in Appendix A. The interview guides for the grantees, coordinators, and non-grantee organizations can be viewed in the Appendices.

II. Impact on Voter Registration and Turnout

Two major objectives of the CEI were to register new voters and to increase turnout of voters new and old. In assessing voter registration and turnout, it is important to consider both direct and indirect impacts. Direct impacts refer to the number of persons whose registrations or turnout can be traced to direct contact with grantee efforts. Indirect impacts are increased registrations or turnout in targeted areas that may have been influenced to some extent by activities of grantee organizations but are not directly linked with those efforts through the completion, for example, of a registration form or a voter pledge card.

Voter Registration: Direct Impact

Data compiled by CEI technical assistance provider LeLievre Information Services from seven Boston grantee organizations indicated that the number of new registrations collected and entered in the VBASE was 1,270 in 2003 and 1,424 in 2004. In 2003 the entries ranged from a low of 84 for one organization and a high of 544 for another. In 2004 the range was from a low of 6 to a high of 592.

It is important to point out, however, that while the above figures are often cited as “new registrations,” they are often misleading and perhaps overstated. The LeLievre Information Services’ analysis, therefore, appropriately checked the names entered in the VBASE to see if they actually appeared on the city lists of valid Boston addresses and voters. The data indicate that the falloff was dramatic. In 2003, of the 1,270 names entered in the VBASE, only 530 were listed on the November Boston voter list. In other words, the percentage of validated registrations of those entered in the VBASE, after accounting for incorrect addresses, misspellings, non-citizens, and voters who had moved but were already registered, was 42%. For 2004, of the 1,424 entered, only 821 or 58% appeared on the November Boston voter list. The 1,351 new voters that actually appeared on the voter lists in 2003-2004 is the most accurate measure of direct impact on actual voter registration.

Voter Registration: Indirect Impact

It is reasonable to suggest that CEI related activities may have resulted in more new voter registrations in targeted communities than those entered in the VBASE. An examination of overall voter registration figures from throughout the city and from CEI targeted areas offers some indication of indirect impact. Notably, in data reported by LeLievre, between November 2003 and November 2004 there were 29,000 newly registered voters city-wide representing an 11% increase. In the targeted precincts over the same period 5,460 voters were added which also was an 11% increase.

Although the above data does give some indication of the indirect effect of CEI efforts on turnout, it is very difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of that impact due to factors such as the presence of other on-going voter initiatives. A method employed by MassVOTE to address this challenge involved the identification of non-CEI “control” precincts in similar precincts in similar neighborhoods. A comparison of CEI precincts with selected control precincts offers a more realistic measure of the possible CEI affect than a comparison of CEI precincts with all Boston neighborhoods, which include well-represented communities such as South Boston and West Roxbury. MassVOTE identified comparison precincts for six neighborhoods that were in grantees’ target areas. Chinatown and Chelsea were not included in the analysis. Clearly, the use of control precincts was a critical element in the analysis by the CEI’s data experts of both registration and turnout. A detailed review and assessment of that methodology as it was applied by MassVOTE is contained in Appendix F.

In comparing September 2002 voter registrations with September 2004 registrations, MassVOTE data showed that CEI precincts had larger increases than their companion control precincts in two cases, about the same growth in two areas, and less growth in two areas. In the

November 2004 general election, three of the grantees' precincts increased more compared with their control precincts and in one it was the same and in two it was worse. The implication of these findings is that, all things being equal (and they seldom are), there were generally no consistent differences in percentage gains for new registrations in targeted as opposed to non-targeted areas

Turnout: Direct Impact

Since the CEI grantees utilized a system of directly eliciting from some voters pledges to cast ballots in upcoming elections, it was possible to determine whether those pledges were actually fulfilled. For voters who registered for the first time directly through CEI efforts, the data show that in 2003 their rate was 29% compared to a city-wide turnout rate of 25% for all voters. Across grantees, however, there was wide variation, 6% – 62%, in turnout. In 2004, new registrants linked with the CEI had a 63% turnout rate compared to a city-wide rate of 67%.

Turnout among already registered voters who signed a pledge was considerably higher than the city-wide average for all voters. In 2003, there were 3,966 registered Boston voters who signed pledges. The turnout rate of these voters was 46%, nearly double the city-wide rate. In 2004, pledges were secured from 3,485 registered voters. Their turnout rate, 78%, was significantly higher than the city-wide figure, 67%.

Grantees had their best results increasing turnout among infrequent voters who signed pledges. These voters occupy a middle ground between those on the one hand who seldom vote at all and those on the other hand that vote in virtually every election.

Turnout: Indirect Impact

The use of control precincts makes it possible to get some indication of the general influence that CEI activities had on turnout in targeted areas. Data from November 2004 measuring growth in turnout suggest that in comparing the CEI precincts with the control precincts the results were mixed. Two CEI areas did better than their control precincts, two others did the same, and two did worse than their control precincts.

Another indication of the influence of the CEI can be gained by looking at turnout increases in CEI target precincts compared to all other precincts in Boston. MassVOTE did not report this information from 2002 to 2003 and from 2003 to 2004. MassVOTE, however, did provide data on increases in turnout from 2000 to 2004. In the 2004 elections, turnout in the 43 CEI target precincts had increased by 17.4% over 2000, compared to an increase of 7.9% in the non-CEI precincts.

The CEI had a significant impact on the Chelsea electoral scene where Chelsea Human Services Collaborative was active in increasing Latino voter participation. From 2000 to 2004, Latino voter participation increased by 8%, drawing heavily (53%) from voters with little or no history voting in prior elections. Latinos virtually closed the voting gap in Chelsea, voting at 70% versus 75% among non-Latinos.

Although the time period analyzed does not correspond to the years evaluated in this report, it is instructive to note Paul Schimek's assessment of Boston and Chelsea's turnout gains in 2002 compared with other high-minority towns and cities in Massachusetts. Boston and Chelsea's gains were ranked one and two respectively. It does seem reasonable to conclude that those results may have been attributable in part to the CEI.

Observations and Recommendations

- Taken together, the data and analytical methods employed by CEI technical assistance providers and TBF demonstrate that the CEI has had an overall positive but variable direct and indirect impact on registration and voter turnout.
- Various data indicate that the CEI's registration activities were successful in increasing the number of registered voters. In 2003 and 2004, there were 1,351 new voters on Boston voter lists who had direct contact with CEI grantee efforts. From November 2003 to November 2004, in CEI targeted precincts 5,460 new voters registered. The rate of increase in these precincts for that period was 11% which was equal to the rate of increase city-wide.
- In comparing CEI precincts with their companion control precincts, there were no consistent indications that one set of precincts outperformed the other in percentage gains in voter registrations.
- Since the CEI targeted precincts with traditionally weaker turnout, it is not surprising that these precincts continued as a whole to have turnout rates lower than the balance of Boston's precincts. For example, in 2004, 63% of voters in CEI precincts went to the polls, while 67% of voters city-wide voted. The fact that the gap seems to be narrowing is an important accomplishment.
- It is a significant achievement that in 2003 and 2004, new voters registered directly through CEI contacts turned out to vote at rates higher than the city-wide average in 2003 and just below the city-wide average in 2004. Generally speaking, new voters tend to have turnout rates that are considerably lower than those of established voters.
- Utilizing the pledge system, the CEI was able to enhance turnout among already registered voters, particularly among occasional or somewhat frequent voters. Established voters who signed pledges had turnout rates that eclipsed the city-wide average for all voters by significant margins. The rate for these CEI-pledged voters was nearly twice that of all voters in 2003 and 11% greater than the city-wide rate in 2004.
- The fact that voter turnout from 2000 to 2004 grew in CEI precincts at a rate more than double that of all other Boston precincts is a notable achievement.
- In Chelsea, the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative had a strong impact on growth in Latino voter participation. Their efforts were particularly effective with voters who had little or no prior record of voting.
- There were some indications that CEI efforts might have their greatest relative impact on low-turnout elections such as local elections and primaries.
- Grantees reported that generally the community responses to their work were good. For those involved in community organizing over a longer period of time, consistent increases in voter turnout were in several cases significant. For others, where voter participation efforts had not been a priority, the challenge remains to maintain a high level of enthusiasm and voter engagement for all elections. The Suffolk County Sheriff's election, for example, proved more difficult to organize around because many people were unfamiliar with the candidates and the functions of the Sheriff.

- There were strong indications that the CEI's model of utilizing community based organizations already active in their communities to enhance registration and turnout was well-conceived. For example, voter participation activities became a natural extension of the work of these organizations when elections were tied to a particular ballot question or issue that the organizations and community identified with.
- There is evidence to suggest, however, that voter registration "*by the numbers*" is most likely to be highest in organizations whose missions, unlike those of the grantees, are mainly political mobilization and education. This should not be surprising. For example, one of the non-grantee organizations that was interviewed and fits this profile appears to have directly registered in 2004 a much higher number of persons than did the CEI grantee organizations.
- The inherent difficulties in isolating the indirect effects of the CEI from the impact of other organizations working to register voters and get them to the polls must be recognized. BostonVOTE, for example, was a precursor to the CEI and was initiated in 1999. Many organizations continue to participate in that, as well as the New Majority Coalition, founded in 2003 to advance an agenda for more equal political and institutional representation by Boston's majority-minority. Dunk the Vote has been actively registering, educating and mobilizing voters in Boston's communities of color for the last decade. OISTE undertook an extensive voter participation campaign in 2004 that focused on Latinos throughout Massachusetts. Partisan campaigns, from school committee to presidential candidates, as well as ballot initiatives are also active in target and non-target neighborhoods.
- It should also be noted that it is difficult as well to precisely determine the impact of CEI efforts, the "halo effect," in other areas, particularly those adjacent to CEI target precincts.
- The use of the control precincts methodology is a good way to give some indication of the indirect influence of the CEI on registration and voting. It is difficult, however, to find "controls" that fit well with targeted precincts due to the exigencies accompanying somewhat unique and thus difficult to compare geographic areas and ethnic communities.
- While the use of contact and pledge lists may allow one to safely assume that a CEI grantee was responsible for getting a voter to the polls, there is not a good measure of the extent to which other mobilization efforts influenced those voters or their counterparts in control precincts. In MassVOTE's analysis of 2004 voter registrations, for example, even in the comparison neighborhoods, registration was on the rise. Using MassVOTE's methodology comparing results in similar precincts, registration increased just as much without the CEI as it did with it in five out of six target neighborhoods.
- The analysis of Latino voting in Chelsea offers some guidance for an alternative means of capturing the impact of those grantees focused on particular ethnic communities. While the CEI tended to target *geographic* areas, some organizations have made significant progress in ethnic communities that are dispersed across precinct lines or that have no parallel precincts elsewhere in the city. For these particular grantees, it would be worthwhile to compare and contrast impacts using different methods.

- The methodologies employed to collect data and to assess impact are sound given some of the limitations and measurement problems that we have acknowledged. There are certainly some specific methodological challenges that might be addressed. For example, the use of control precincts is a powerful tool but perhaps those precincts could be more narrowly selected to better match the demographic make-up of the target areas, and, thereby, contributing to a more accurate picture. The challenge remains to develop a tool that can be employed in assessing the relative impact of CEI activities in areas like Chinatown when comparable non-targeted areas cannot be located.
- There are also some fairly simple calculations that could be made and reported that would indicate the impact of CEI activities. For instance, a way to assess the direct impact of registration efforts is to show the share of new voters within the targeted areas accounted for by persons newly registered through CEI outreach.
- Generally speaking the CEI does a good job in soliciting, recording, and maintaining data on grantee contacts. In addition, information from Boston and Chelsea on registration, voter turnout, relevant demographic factors, etc., is also crucial for shaping the most effective strategies and approaches and for the assessment of outcomes with regard to registration and turnout. Consequently, it is important that there be more attention given to the regular and systematic compilation, dissemination, and analysis of this data.
- There is no doubt that many grantees felt tremendous pressure to meet what they regarded as funders' expectations relating to increases in registrations and turnout. The frequent references by grantees to the emphasis on generating the "*numbers*" reflected both recognition of the need to document "*successes*" and frustration because "*success*" was being defined, in the eyes of some, too narrowly. The focus on producing measurable data was described by one grantee as making the organizations "*very self-conscious, so we think we're doing good work but we are pressured to look at the numbers and not sure we could meet expectations.*"

III. Additional Products: Newspaper Coverage and Candidacy Patterns

In addition to the impact on voter registration and turnout, it is useful to consider other effects or "products" of enhanced turnout and political participation in the CEI's target neighborhoods. The products analyzed here are first the extent of print media attention to the CEI and matters related to enhanced political participation in the target communities, and then the possible encouragement of candidates of color and women.

Newspaper Coverage

Several, if not all of the CEI grantees, did some of their own media work, resulting in coverage in the mainstream, local, and ethnic press. The funders collaborative and technical assistance providers also conducted media outreach although according to one technical assistance provider "*there was no coordinated media strategy.*"

In progress reports for the second half of 2004, six out of eight grantees reported using local and ethnic media in their 2004 election work. The MAHA and Project R.I.G.H.T., for example, issued press releases in fall 2004 describing their successes in increasing voter turnout. Viet-AID published articles in the New England Vietnamese papers, and the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative targeted local and Spanish language media. Some grantees used the media to connect their issue and election work. When the election results were announced the significant increase in voter turnout, particularly in Chinatown, drew greater media coverage among all the major newspapers.

To see how effectively the CEI actually was able to generate media attention, a review was undertaken of the coverage of the CEI and voter turnout in the target neighborhoods. Both specific coverage of the CEI and the grantees' registration and get out the vote (GOTV) work, as well as broader coverage of what could be called "secondary" impacts, including voting trends among communities of color city-wide, campaigns by candidates and others committed to issues of interest to communities of color, and increased access to elected officials were looked at. The search also captured election-related activities the groups may have been involved in, such as non-partisan candidate nights, hosting campaign trail stops, etc. Given the large number of print media, the search was limited to indexed, on-line sources (*The Boston Herald*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Bay State Banner* and *The Boston Haitian Reporter*) and media files (including mainstream, neighborhood, and ethnic press) provided by some of the grantees and TBF.

Virtually no coverage of the CEI's and grantees' registration and GOTV efforts could be found in *The Boston Herald*. The exception was a story on voter mobilization by pro-tenant groups including MA ACORN in October 2003.² After the local election in 2003, *The Boston Herald* also ran a story about the important moment reached in Boston politics, marked by a win by a Latino candidate, Felix Arroyo, over Patricia White, the daughter of former Mayor Kevin White.³

Coverage by *The Boston Globe* was more extensive. In fall 2002, *The Globe* covered the launching of the CEI and the Boston- and Chelsea-based grantees.⁴ This was presumably a result of a concerted media push by the funders group and/or the grantees themselves. Post-election, *The Globe* also covered the heightened minority presence at the polls, especially in neighborhoods like Chinatown, Mission Hill, Uphams Corner, Allston, Fields Corner, Franklin Field, Mattapan, Codman Square, Grove Hall, Egleston Square, and Dudley Square, attributing this in part to funding and work conducted under the CEI.⁵ *The Globe* linked the increased turnout particularly among Latinos to mobilization aimed at defeating Question 2 and to the presence of Latino candidates for state office.⁶

² "Activists push pro-tenant council candidates," by Steve Marantz, *The Boston Herald*, October 30, 2003.

³ "Election Day 2003: White fails in council bid," by Steve Marantz and Ellen J. Silberman, *The Boston Herald*, November 5, 2003.

⁴ For example, "Urgency sounded for Latino voters," by Angelica Medaglia, October 31, 2002; "Groups push to get out the vote," by Jenna Russell, *The Boston Globe*, November 3, 2002.

⁵ "Minority areas show biggest hub jump in voters, gap in participation still remains, though," by Cindy Rodriguez, *The Boston Globe*, November 7, 2002,

⁶ For example, "Activists encouraged by turnout of Latinos," by Cindy Rodriguez, *The Boston Globe*, November 9, 2002.

In the two year period focused upon in this evaluation, the CEI and the grantees got more limited coverage by *The Globe*. In conjunction with the 2003 election season, *The Globe* covered GOTV efforts in Grove Hall⁷ and Chelsea. After the September preliminary election, *The Globe*'s focus turned to the low turnout citywide. The Chinese Progressive Association splashed into election news in late September 2003 with claims of voter coercion in Chinatown, helping to raise voters' and public officials' awareness of the importance of their vote and the organization itself.⁸ While the paper may not have been printing stories about the CEI itself, *The Globe* was clearly paying attention to changing demographics and voting patterns in Boston. The paper analyzed results of the November 2003 city council elections, citing Felix Arroyo's victory as a "political bellwether" in Boston politics.⁹ Again, however, neither the CEI nor the grantee organizations were mentioned in this coverage. There was no mention by *The Globe* of the CEI or the grantees in 2004, although the paper did give considerable attention to Andrea Cabral's September Sheriff's race victory and to other registration and GOTV efforts in Boston's communities of color.¹⁰

Many of the smaller, neighborhood and ethnic papers provided some coverage of the CEI and the grantees' GOTV work. Coverage in the weekly *Bay State Banner* was more consistent and in-depth than *The Globe*.¹¹ *The Banner*'s coverage in 2002 actually attributed increased turnout in neighborhoods of color to voter mobilization groups including CEI grantees.¹² In late summer and early fall 2003, *The Banner* covered the CEI again, as grantees received new funds and revved their engines for the city council elections.¹³ *The Banner* did cover the CEI and grantees in 2004, albeit less so than previously. That summer, Project R.I.G.H.T. received coverage as a co-sponsor of a Hip Hop Summit aimed at registering young voters,¹⁴ and when Cabral won in September the paper again attributed surges in minority voter participation to local groups including those funded by the CEI.¹⁵ As did *The Globe*, *The Banner* proclaimed Cabral's victory—a year after Arroyo's—a sign of "the New Boston."

The *Allston-Brighton TAB* also covered the CEI itself and the links ABCDC drew between local issues such as housing and the election. As the election drew near in fall 2004, *The TAB* reported on the ABCDC/Healthy Boston's registration efforts among Latinos, Asian Americans, Russians, African Americans and residents of subsidized housing.¹⁶ After the November election, *The TAB* called the results a "massive turnout" in that neighborhood, attributing the surge in part to a jump in registrations.¹⁷ Papers serving the Chinese community, such as *The Singtao Newspaper*, *World Journal*, *Ming Bao*, *Boston Chinese News*, and *The*

⁷ "Grove Hall troops deploy," by Dorian Block, *The Boston Globe*, September 21, 2003.

⁸ "Coercion of voters reported in Chinatown," by Donovan Slack, *The Boston Globe*, September 26, 2003.

⁹ "Arroyo win hailed as political bellwether," by Rick Klein, *The Boston Globe*, November 6, 2003.

¹⁰ "Cabral's shocker ushers in 'a new day' — for Murphy, Irish name not enough," by Michael Jones, *The Boston Globe*, September 19, 2004.

¹¹ For example, "Activists push for turnout," by Jeremy Schwab, *The Bay State Banner*, October 31, 2002.

¹² "Increased voter turnout seen in Boston's communities of color," by Yawu Miller, *The Bay State Banner*, November 14, 2002.

¹³ "Grant funds get-out-the-vote effort," by Jeremy Schwab, *The Bay State Banner*, September 4, 2003.

¹⁴ "Rap summit registers 8,000 voters," by Jeremy Schwab, *The Bay State Banner*, July 29, 2004.

¹⁵ "Voter mobilization yields higher turnout," by Jeremy Schwab, *The Bay State Banner*, September 23, 2004.

¹⁶ "Forum focuses on housing as election-year issue," by Erin Smith, October 22, 2004, *Allston-Brighton TAB*, and "A vote with thanks," by Erin Smith, *Allston-Brighton TAB*, October 29, 2004.

¹⁷ "A massive turnout of voters in A-B," by Erin Smith, *Allston-Brighton TAB*, November 5, 2004.

Sampan, have also covered the CEI and, especially, the Chinese Progressive Association's election work.

Candidacy Patterns

Changes in the race and gender composition of the candidates for public office in the cities where the CEI was active might be associated with increased voter activity by communities of color. A look at the contested, preliminary elections in Boston for district and city-wide city council and state representative seats were examined with regard to diversity because they are the best indicators of possible patterns. Preliminary elections involve the largest number of candidates and city council and state representative districts are small enough to be localized campaigns.

The following chart summarizes the data collected:

Candidates of Color and Female Candidates in Contested
Preliminary Boston Elections, 2002-2005

Year	Races	Candidates of Color/ Total	Women Candidates/ Total	% Candidates of Color	% Women
2002	Boston City Council*, State Representative	4/26	5/26	15%	19%
2003	Boston City council	7/20	6/20	35%	30%
2004	State Representative	3/6	2/6	50%	33%
2005	Boston City Council	7/26	6/26	27%	23%

* special election for city council

There is some anecdotal evidence that CEI activity within an environment of greater political activity by communities of color has had an effect on candidates of color running for office. For example, three Haitian candidates who ran in 2005 did so for an open seat in the state legislature. This opening resulted from voter activism around redistricting and involved many of the CEI organizations. Sam Yoon, the first Asian American to run for the Boston City Council, became a candidate after being involved in the New Majority Coalition, a civic participation vehicle for communities of color that involved a number of CEI groups.

It was also heartening for those communities to witness some notable electoral victories. In 2003, Felix Arroyo became the first Latino elected to an at large seat on the Boston City Council. In the Suffolk Sheriff's race, Andrea Cabral, a Cape Verdean female, defeated an Irish

American candidate. In the special legislative election, Linda Dorcena Forry, a woman of color, triumphed.

In Chelsea, the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative identified the “active recruiting of candidates for special election for re-structured School Committee” as one of its major activities. In 2004, two Latinos who were both new to electoral politics won School Committee seats.

Observations and Recommendations

- Although the grantees recognized the importance of media coverage, they did not feel that media coverage played a major role in their ability to carry out their efforts effectively. Any media attention gained by grantee organizations did not appear to derive mainly from their CEI efforts. In cases where groups mentioned receiving this attention, it was linked to years of ongoing work on different community issues.
- The media coverage of the CEI although limited did help to raise the profile of the organizations and of the elections. This attention most likely did encourage more voters and potential voters to go to the polls. It may also have swayed candidates as they made decisions about which neighborhoods and issues to focus on in their campaigns and, if successful, their deliberations as elected officials.
- *The Boston Globe*, *The Bay State Banner* and other local and ethnic media have shown interest in covering changing demographics and voter turnout in Boston, as well as election irregularities. The coverage could fairly easily be linked to efforts of some of the grantees especially as part of their association with critical community issues.
- Media work should target the larger newspapers like *The Globe*, as well as smaller local and ethnic outlets such as *The Boston Haitian Reporter*, *The Sampan*, *La Semana*, *The Jamaica Plain Gazette*, etc.
- There doesn't appear to be sufficient data to identify any clear trends regarding a possible relationship between increased civic engagement activities centered on communities of color and political candidates from those communities. Among the factors that limit the ability to draw conclusions are the inherent limitations of the length of time, i.e., three years, of the CEI project and the fact that each of the elections in which the CEI has been active has been quite different in character.
- Based on data from recent elections in Boston and Chelsea, candidates of color have entered several contests and some have met with electoral success. These candidates it can be assumed are to some degree products of increased voter mobilization in communities of color and catalysts for greater participation from these communities.
- It is also reasonable to surmise that the electoral successes of several candidates of color in Boston and Chelsea were positively influenced by the activities of CEI grantee organizations promoting registration and turnout.

IV. Impact on Grantee Organizations

In order to assess the impact of the CEI on grantee organizations with an eye to whether civic engagement activities were ingrained in the work of the organizations and whether those activities can be sustained, the goals and objectives of the project, the ways in which staff were organized, the data collection process and technical support, and the degree of collaboration that existed among the grantees are considered.

Goals of the CEI

Among the most important determinants of a productive project that has a positive impact on grantees are a clear articulation of goals by the funders and a full understanding of those goals by the grantees. The grantees' descriptions of the CEI goals were consistent with documents, e.g., "Invitation for Proposals," TBF website, CEI evaluations, etc., that spelled-out the project's key objectives. The grantee organizations stated that the goal of the CEI was to increase political participation through voter registration, education, and mobilization. While some organizations stressed registration and others voter turnout, all of the grantees reiterated the CEI emphasis on targeting low-income communities and communities of color.

Grantees described the funders' expectations or measures of success as: a) an increase in the number of registered voters and voter turnout within the areas targeted, and b) building capacity among grantee organizations to sustain voter participation efforts. Capacity building in particular centered on increased knowledge, use, and maintenance of the VBASE technology and the ability to secure adequate funding.

While grantees indicated that they clearly understood the CEI goals, they also perceived some limitations in those goals. By placing so much emphasis on the increase in voter numbers, for example, many grantees thought that there was little opportunity to discuss and learn how organizations could even more effectively connect the issues that were important to their constituents, e.g., affordable housing, community and economic development, environmental risks, etc., to the electoral process. As one grantee noted, *"Up until last year conversations around, what is community power, were not discussed. Funders wanted an increase in numbers, this is easy. But it is harder to grasp impact when we look at the effect our efforts have on [long-term] community change."* This point was echoed several times by other grantees, but they also acknowledged that there were improvements in this area as the initiative progressed.

Related to the issue of shared understandings about goals among grantees, funders, and technical advisors was the overall synchronization around responsibilities and roles. There was some indication, for example, that the technical advisors and the grantees were hampered at times by a lack of clear direction from the funders collaborative. The fact that the funders had different levels of involvement, experience, and perspectives meant, in the view of some participants, that the funders' messages at times lacked clarity and a consensus was hard to achieve.

Personnel

The majority of grantees relied on current staff, usually community organizers, for their voter participation efforts. The additional staff hired by grantee organizations in conjunction with the CEI was usually temporary, e.g., canvassers, project coordinators, data entry personnel, etc. Membership organizations like MA-ACORN and MAHA relied to a great extent on member volunteers whom they then trained. Several organizations relied upon involving youth in CEI related activities. They reported that the civic engagement work seemed to have a particular attraction and resonance for young people.

There were indications that the use of personnel who shared the culture and language of the targeted audiences contributed to positive results. For example, it was reported that the community response to canvassers that spoke foreign languages shared by some community members was favorable and enhanced receptiveness to the information and issues that grantees were sharing.

Everyone contacted in the grantee organizations acknowledged that the CEI strained their capacity because it added more hours and tasks to their workload; staff was "*overextended*." In most cases, grantees were "*overwhelmed*" with the amount of work required, especially when incorporating the new technology systems. The time it took to learn how to compile and input information and then to operate and maintain the databases was most stressful. In some cases, the database person was replaced several times which meant spending additional hours re-training new personnel.

Growth and changing staff roles were also issues for the organizations providing technical assistance for the CEI. For the technical advisor organizations that were newer, the fact that they were evolving meant that their ability to work effectively with the CEI grantees was itself "*challenging*."

Data Collection and Technical Support

Skilled technical support and effective use of databases are crucial elements for the effective operation of the CEI and its future prospects. All grantees agreed that the data collection system was extremely useful or, as one grantee put it, it was "*totally awesome*." The information was used for tracking resident/constituent activities, outreach efforts, and polling. Most of the organizations also agreed that the database enhanced their capabilities and effectiveness to engage in other work important to them such as tenant organizing and public policy advocacy around issues such as the Community Stabilization Act, Community Preservation Act, health issues, immigrant rights, bilingual education, etc.

Effectively utilizing the data collection program did pose many challenges for the grantees. Having the staff available to train was a major challenge and for some the system proved difficult to learn and maintain. Keeping information fresh with a highly transient population was particularly challenging. Some grantees mentioned system "*glitches*." For example, some organizations found it hard to update information. Also the system apparently did

not report a person's primary language. In addition, there were problems installing the system onto some servers.

The support provided by technical advisors was described as very good. Advisors were knowledgeable, competent, patient, generally accessible, provided one-on-one assistance, and trained staff in new skills and techniques. For some grantees, the technical advisors were not always able, particularly early on, to impart information in user-friendly terms which presented some initial learning challenges.

Collaboration

The abilities of grantees to work effectively with each other, the technical assistance providers, and the funders are critical to the ultimate success and sustainability of the CEI. When asked about these matters, grantees did not elaborate very much on collaborating with each other. Some grantees said that there was not enough time or opportunity for CEI grantees to work together very often.

Any opportunities for grantees to "*connect*" were accomplished primarily within the learning group meetings. Here the organizations shared experiences and discussed alternative approaches, tactics, etc., and most of the organizations found these to be useful functions of the learning groups. For some organizations, however, the discussions were too focused on "*technique*;" on "*best practices*" vs. the "*politics*" and "*strategies*" defining the organizations' approaches to their work. Thus there was some dissatisfaction with the content of the dialogue in the learning group. This reflected, once again, a desire to see the goals of the CEI itself expanded where voter education and mobilization efforts could be integrated more directly with the prevailing organizing, advocacy, reform, and leadership development activities of the organizations.

Meetings were also said to be too short to allow for a more meaningful, substantive dialogue. Some grantees suggested having longer, but fewer meetings. Some grantees received funding for civic engagement work separate from CEI, e.g., CPA, Project R.I.G.H.T, and the Hyde Square Task Force, which led one grantee to comment on what she saw as a "*trend*" among funders to want grantees to come together often and share experiences. However, this has now become "*too much of a good thing*" because the organization had to attend three peer learning meetings monthly.

There were indications that some grantees at times felt uncomfortable when meetings took place with funders and grantees together in the same room. They felt that there was at times a lack of confidentiality when grantees discussed problems concerning their organizations when funders were present.

Relationships among the grantee organizations were described generally as cordial. In one instance, however, a grantee described an incident where her organization was questioned by another CEI grantee organization about encroaching upon its territory. Furthermore, it was alleged that representatives affiliated with one organization displayed a "*bizarre*" level of cultural insensitivity toward youth interns from another grantee organization.

Integration of Civic Engagement Activities

One of the important elements to assess was the extent to which the activities called for in the CEI became important parts of the work and missions of the grantee organizations. For two grantee organizations, civic engagement and political empowerment were regarded as fundamental to what they did even before the advent of the CEI. For others, civic engagement as defined by voter registration and mobilization had not been done as consistently prior to the CEI. All of the organizations now view these tasks as regular parts of their work.

The civic engagement work for most organizations became more integrated into the other activities engaged in by those organizations. One organization, for example, that conducts workshops on home buying, credit counseling, etc., now integrates voter participation "*into all the workshops,*" and another organization stated that civic engagement activities are now integrated into its "*day- to- day work.*"

In the majority of cases, grantees acknowledged that the CEI provided essential "*resources and tools*" and enabled them to conduct their civic engagement and overall organizing work "*in a more sophisticated way.*" This sophistication was reflected, for example, in the utilization of the VBASE to track constituents and to mobilize beyond the elections and in the application of varied voter turnout strategies such as one grantee's establishment of a block captain system to facilitate electoral tasks.

The heightened role and responsibilities of grantee organizations in the areas of voter mobilization and education were clearly recognized by members of the communities served by these organizations. Grantees reported that they regularly fielded numerous requests for information on all aspects of the electoral and political process, and they quickly gained reputations as the "*go to*" places for information and assistance on these matters. For many constituents, the grantee organizations became trusted and accessible sources of information and "*people were not turning to traditional city agencies to get information.*"

Sustainability and Expansion

Clearly, for most of the grantees, the CEI advanced their belief in the importance and value of promoting civic participation and gave them access to the tools and resources to do this work effectively. During the project period, organizations fully utilized the funds made available to them and they utilized them well. For those grantees already involved in civic engagement efforts, the CEI funds allowed them to continue and to improve their work.

All of the organizations, however, acknowledged that there needed to be further attention paid to building organizational capabilities and skills. All grantees hoped to receive continued funding. Further funding was deemed essential by the grantees either for the civic engagement work to continue at all or for it to continue in an undiminished fashion. As one grantee stated, when asked how its civic engagement work would be affected by either the continuation or reduction in funding, "*If we have time, money and staffing time, then we'll do what we can. If we don't get the full funding to cover all costs then we'll do less...[there] won't be a huge effort.*"

In the view of many organizations, sustainability was more than a matter of additional funds. They felt that broadening the goals and focus of the CEI to embrace discussions of community power, agenda setting, leadership building, etc., was critical to the future of the CEI. Many of the CEI grantees and the technical advisors that worked with them indicated that just as much as conveying information on the mechanics and general role of registration and voting it was also essential to develop a more direct link between participation, policy, and communities shaping their own destinies. As one technical advisor put it, it was necessary for the organizations *"to connect their issues with reasons why people needed to vote."*

Several grantee organizations mentioned how their affiliation with the CEI enhanced their *"legitimacy"* in the eyes of constituents, elected and agency officials, and funders. In the words of one grantee organization, *"Being part of CEI gives us legitimacy among funders, and agency leaders have shifted their opinion. They used to see us as fringe and now they view us differently."* This increased legitimacy is useful for many reasons and not the least of which is its contribution to improve the prospects mightily for the sustainability of the civic engagement and other work performed by the organizations.

The support provided by MassVote and the Commonwealth Coalition was specifically mentioned as a critical component in sustaining grantees' future efforts. Assistance of this kind, perhaps centralized in one group, is essential for the CEI to work effectively. Also, the learning groups helped grantees to improve their planning and set realistic goals (developing work plans with timelines) which were deemed important in assuring sustainable civic engagement programs.

Observations and Recommendations

- Grantees believed that goals relating to voter registration and turnout were clearly identified and reasonable.
- Many grantees, however, thought that success should be measured by *"more than just numbers."* Grantees did acknowledge that by the end of the 2003-2004 grant cycle the CEI learning group and funders collaborative appeared to be supporting a framework that informally at least included broad advocacy and community mobilization into the CEI's objectives and that was sensitive to the notion that numbers needn't tell the whole story.
- An important consideration in looking at the integration and sustainability of civic engagement activities relates to the observation about the larger goals of these pursuits and the definition of "success." What exactly is it that the CEI seeks to sustain? How will it be known when it has been achieved? If, for example, generating more registrations and encouraging higher turnout remain the main components, then the likelihood is that organizations will be variably equipped to maintain these activities at a high level. If, however, the goal is to promulgate within the work of the organizations and throughout their interactions with communities the importance of civic engagement for the identification and advancement of community goals and interests, then the CEI could be more readily sustained and without a steady injection of additional resources.

- In defining the range of activities called for in the CEI, it is reasonable to support grantee organization efforts to be involved in electoral reform and election monitoring activities. Assuring that the electoral system is fair, open, and responsive is critical in gaining voter confidence and providing a foundation for appeals to residents to involve themselves in the political process.
- There were some indications from the grantees that *"the funders"* didn't seem able or willing to embrace the goals, perspectives, and even the vocabulary of the community based organizations that the CEI relied on. This was reflected in the effort to get the funders to focus on more than just registration and turnout figures and to consider matters such as community empowerment and control, institutional barriers, issue advocacy and agenda setting, etc. Some organizations felt that some funders simply did not understand where those organizations were coming from. As one grantee remarked, *"Funders don't have language to communicate broader goals clearly. Funders don't quite understand how CBOs do grassroots organizing. They don't ask the right questions to get to points that are important."*
- While honing appropriate techniques for registration and turnout is undoubtedly important for sustainability, the ability to convey meaningful *"messages"* that link civic engagement with the policies and issues that touch the lives of voters directly is equally essential for long term viability and effectiveness. The mantra coming from many grantees was clear, *"Link voter mobilization to policy."* As one technical advisor observed, it is important to link *"issues to voter mobilization; voting as part of civic duty is a limited message, explaining why the vote can create political power, and being responsive to issues that is what's important."* Or as a grantee put it, effective outreach rests on *"connecting issues...with understanding government."*
- The reports of extensive involvement of youth by many grantees are gratifying and, indeed, important in several ways. For example, the political pursuits can be a hook to involve young people in the broad range of activities engaged in by the grantee organizations. Furthermore, the participation of youth enhances the prospects of those organizations to sustain the civic engagement work.
- The view expressed by some that there wasn't enough of a feeling that grantees were working together as a team perhaps could be addressed by having more experienced organizations work more closely with newer organizations. Indeed, for established organizations to receive renewed funding, they might be required to take on this mentoring task as part of their unique responsibilities.
- Making the learning groups useful for a broad range of groups with varying levels of experience was challenging. There is a tension between having the learning groups serve to help promote a sense of collectivism among the grantees, and making the meetings relevant and interesting to organizations with varying levels of sophistication, knowledge, etc.
- There should be fewer (three to four per year) and longer meetings, and with a more substantive, e.g., strategic, skill building, focus.

- The meetings should not all be held at TBF office. It seems reasonable to accept the recommendation of some grantees to hold meetings at grantee sites to add to the learning process.
- Better integration of similar efforts throughout the city could create a more holistic approach and allow participating organizations to channel their energies more efficiently. At the moment the CEI is formally somewhat separate from other efforts with similar goals. Discussions, therefore, are held separately often forcing grantees to have to split the little time and resources they have attending many different meetings.
- Pursuing more collaborative activities will likely involve tradeoffs. For example, more time meeting and working together which would certainly enhance teamwork and information sharing also requires more resources, time, etc. This is exacerbated by the fact that these organizations by design are engaged in a variety of pursuits. It is vital, therefore, especially for the technical assistance providers and funders, to realize that the goal is to make participation activities central to these organizations but not overly consuming.
- The spillover phenomenon was an important one and it is clear that the spillage took place in both directions. The civic engagement work influenced the other work that organizations were involved with and that other work spilled over into CEI work. There is little doubt that for most organizations the CEI both built upon existing relationships between organizations and constituents and established new ones manifesting a key element of the theory of change.
- There was broad consensus that more resources were needed to carry out and sustain the CEI work. Although it is difficult to fully flesh out the meaning of this lament while organizations were engaged in the CEI, the cry for more resources does suggest strongly that the ability of most organizations to sustain this work without further funding is seriously hampered.
- There is an obvious and understandable tension between the desire principally expressed by technical assistance providers on the one hand for even more systematic and regular data reporting and on the other hand with grantees feeling that the data collection and reporting responsibilities required a heavy investment of time and staff resources. Obviously a balance needs to be reached. Undoubtedly, however, the time and resources devoted to record keeping are most productively expended when the data truly supports the work of the grantee organizations. When viewed in this way data collection and reporting can be looked upon less as chores than as accompaniments to building a vital asset.
- Evidence that the grantee organizations became in many cases the place for community members to go to seek voter information and to help navigate and understand the electoral process provides strong support for the central role that the CEI and its grantees occupied in the communities they touched. This relationship was one built on accessibility, trust, and reliability and is a very significant achievement and an essential foundation for ongoing sustainability.
- The heightened visibility, capabilities, and legitimacy that the CEI helped bring to grantee organizations were important consequences of the involvement of those organizations in the

CEI. Among several crucial audiences, the standing of these organizations was enhanced. These strengthened bonds are important assets that will serve the interests of the targeted communities and will add to the clout of the grantee organizations. These bonds once established both further emphasize the importance of sustainability, i.e., there are more people invested in and dependent on the civic engagement work continuing, and require even greater accountability on the part of the organizations engaged in these activities.

- Evaluation should continue to include several different means of comparison, be conducted on an ongoing basis, and be available to grantees in a consistent and timely fashion. The overall project and the grantees stand to learn and perform more effectively from having data quickly fed back to them, and from being able to compare their results from different perspectives.
- All of the grantees advanced the reasonable request that they be given access to this evaluation.

Appendix A: A Sample of Civic Engagement Initiatives in the United States

Baltimore Community Fellowships Program assists individuals to use their education and professional skills to help marginalized communities become more engaged in community and social justice issues. The program has funded individuals to successfully address a range of issues including media literacy and advocacy, juvenile justice, immigration issues, community art, and economic justice.

Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 900 college and university presidents, committed to connecting, challenging, and supporting college and university students in their community work, activism, leadership, and civic growth. The organization's ***Raise Your Voice*** initiative is increasing, celebrating, and deepening student civic engagement efforts on college campuses. Campus Compact has been a leader in creating supportive academic environments for community service, helping to pass and establish service-oriented federal programs and legislation; forming partnerships with business, community and government leaders; and providing funding and awards for outstanding service work.

Center for Civic Education is an independent nonprofit organization based in California. The center has offices in Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Washington, D. C. The center's programs are implemented in every state and U.S. territory. It also has partnerships with more than 40 nations. The aim of the center is to develop an enlightened citizenry. Through the We the People curriculum, students receive civic education focusing on the history and principles of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. We the People... Project Citizen is a curriculum program that promotes participation in local and state government

Center for Community and Civic Engagement, University of Southern Mississippi strives to strengthen democratic ideals by fostering sustained partnerships that improve educational opportunities and achievement. Partnerships with K-16 institutions and community-based organizations focus on civic responsibility and community needs.

Center for Civic Engagement, University of Texas at Brownville/Texas Southmost College was formed to create "an engaged campus that connects scholarship, action learning, and service with community partners to help revitalize community." The center includes a Kids Voting program.

Center for Civic Engagement, University of Texas at El Paso is a non-partisan civic initiative to register and encourage young El Pasoans to vote in local, state, and national elections. Through the program "Vote Now!" the center provides a service-learning opportunity for students whose civic engagement activities are linked with coursework. Students are trained to be guest speakers in area high schools to talk about voting. They also set up voter registration tables at high school cafeterias.

Center for Communication and Civic Engagement's Student Voices Project in Seattle utilizes a year-long civic education curriculum designed to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for young people to become active and effective citizens. The program has attracted students living in poverty at underachieving schools. The objective of the program is to increase voting, and classroom visits and forums are held with political candidates and partnerships are forged with

local media to produce positive coverage of young people and their involvement with the political process.

Center for Community Change helps people to develop the skills and resources they need to improve their communities and change policies and institutions that adversely affect them. They work with local and national organizations to build a community's capacity for self-help, develop strong leaders, provide critical services, build homes, develop businesses, give residents a say in their community's future and give low income people a sense of hope.

Center for Liberal Education and Civic Engagement, Association of American Colleges and Universities "seeks to deepen understandings of the relation of liberal education to service and civic responsibilities." The center was founded in 2003 and is the result of a partnership between the AAC&U and Campus Compact.

Choose or Lose 2004 was a partnership of MTV and a diverse coalition of youth organizations to focus on the shared goal of registering 20 million youth to vote in the presidential election. A "Pre-lection" was held where registered voters cast their ballot in a simulated, secure cyberspace election during the weeks before the election.

Citizen Academy provides a forum for concerned citizens to gather and have moderated discussions about critical community issues. In these discussions, citizens brainstorm possible grassroots solutions, bring their skills to the table, create action plans, and learn from one another. The program also includes one-time and multi-week courses on community issues, taught by volunteer faculty, as a way to provide community volunteers with a bridge from volunteer service to broader civic involvement. City Cares affiliates in nine cities have included Citizen Academies as part of their program offerings.

Community Foundation for the National Capital Region: DC Youth Philanthropy Initiative believes that youth voices and participation deserve true integration into community and civic life. Their goals are to increase opportunities for youth civic engagement, increase investments in youth development, raise awareness of youth needs, and raise awareness that youth are real partners and sources of knowledge and strength in a community.

Declare Yourself was a project of the Declaration of Independence Road Trip, that rallied young people to vote with a multimedia education and empowerment campaign that featured voter registration forms on its website. Public Service Announcements on *Comedy Central*, TV concerts and nationwide live spoken word and music tours were also used to increase the youth vote.

Decatur Community Partnership: Integrated Model of Communication for Social Change is a group of organizations and civic leaders in Decatur, Ill, working since 1991 to coordinate the delivery of health and human services citywide. Since 2000, the Partnership has led efforts in civic dialogue and community-based problem-solving using a "communications for social change" model. With this model, the Partnership has helped Decatur residents articulate a community agenda, identify necessary changes, and achieve positive changes in attitudes, behaviors, and opportunities.

Donor's Education Collaborative (DEC) of NYC: Constituency-Building for Public School Reform is a joint grant-making effort of New York-based public education funders to promote broad public engagement in systemic public school reform in New York City by building an informed, organized, and empowered constituency of parents, educators, business and community leaders, and concerned residents. DEC supports projects that identify and work toward changes in policies and practices that will improve learning and achievement for all children; will strengthen the relationship of schools to community; will generate policy analysis to inform and encourage public dialogue; and will build and sustain public participation, new partnerships, and greater civic commitment to the improvement of public schools.

George Washington University: New Voters Project is a large grassroots youth voter mobilization campaign that conducts nonpartisan voter registration, list building, and grassroots strategies in six states. Strategies include maintaining a strong presence on college campuses, reaching out to non-students, providing online voter registration, and creating partnerships with businesses, community groups and schools.

Grassroots Inc. was started two decades ago in Buffalo's east side by community activists who believed that the predominantly black residents could only improve their lives by electing a person who understood their needs. Working through the ranks to get their candidates elected into Democratic Party posts, Grassroots Inc. has seen its members elected into the city council and into the Erie County legislature. The fact that there are minority candidates running has led to residents being energized to vote and to be politically engaged.

Hip-Hop Summit Action Network partnered with several other organizations to bring awareness about the importance of voting by urban youth and to register them to vote.

National Voice: General Support for Democratic Participation/Get Out The Vote helps non-partisan non-profit and community groups promote voting and other forms of civic participation and to understand the challenges and opportunities of nonpartisan electoral activity. The organization is tracking what these non-partisan non-profits are doing to increase public participation in the democratic process, and has made the information publicly available on its website. National Voice has stimulated over 2,000 non-profit groups to make the connection between their issues, their constituencies, and voting. Using a wide variety of expertise, media, project modeling and technologies, National Voice has helped nonprofit groups communicate in neighborhoods as well as with the media.

Project Vote is a non-partisan effort that has registered over 3 million low-income and minority voters nationwide, won a dozen law suits to protect their right to vote, trained organizers, and provided registrants with follow-up voter education.

Progressive Maryland is a grassroots organization comprising thousands of working families. that support issues of living wages, health care, election reform, tax fairness, public transportation, and voter registration through aggressive community organizing. Their goal is a more mobilized, informed, and engaged public.

Rock the Vote was established by music industry leaders to connect the entertainment community and the youth culture; and to coordinate media campaigns and activities that empower young people with projects such as Community Street Team, Human Relations Campaign, Rap the Vote, RTV Latino, and Rock the Native Vote. Rock the Vote has provided, for example, an online voter information and registration drive; weekly text messaging via cell phones about election updates, reminders to vote, and information about polling locations.

Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement at Northern Kentucky University “promotes a democratic society through the development of civic literacy and civic skills. These skills include: a commitment to understand and remain current regarding local, national, and international issues; openness to diverse viewpoints; the ability to participate in public deliberation and dialogue; and a willingness to take informed action to address community needs.”

The Tides Foundation: Los Angeles Immigrant Funders Collaborative is a group of eight local and national funders that makes grants to non-profits working with immigrants and refugees in the areas of health, civic participation, education, and immigrant rights.

University of California Los Angeles, Center for the Study of Urban Poverty: Social Change Across Borders aims to promote civic participation among “disenfranchised” populations, with a focus on indigenous residents, immigrant households and women. The project convenes gatherings within these communities and facilitates dialogues that allow participants to identify effective techniques for civic engagement and share success stories and challenges. To support participants in these dialogues and to build their leadership skills, the project connects them with more established activists and organizations.

The YMCA Civic Engagement initiative is an ongoing effort to increase the capacity of YMCAs to promote the development of civic engagement attitudes, skills and behaviors in young people. The YMCA defines civic engagement as a “person’s capacity to work with others to affect common interests, to see oneself as a stakeholder in public life, to value the mechanisms for democratic decision-making, and to believe that individuals have a responsibility to contribute to their communities.”

Youth in Focus has developed and field-tested Youth REP (Youth-led Action Research, Evaluation, and Planning), a technique for mobilizing young people's energy and information as means of social change. When youth are “in focus,” young people can play critical and informed roles in shaping their own futures, and collaborate with each other and with adults to improve the institutions and communities that affect their lives. Youth In Focus provides training and capacity building.

Appendix B: Protocol for Administration of Interviews

Instructions for Telephone Interviewer

Introduce yourself and state your affiliation with UMASS-Boston: i.e., Asian American Institute, Trotter Institute, and Gastón Institute. We are conducting a survey of the grantees of the Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI) for the funders.

Introduction Script

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey. We will probably need an hour to complete all of the questions. First let me explain the purpose of this interview and what we hope to learn from you and others who participated in the CEI.

This evaluation of the CEI is a collaborative effort by the Institute for Asian American Studies, the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, and the William Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture. The study is commissioned by The Boston Foundation.

The evaluation project will assess the impact of community-based organizations' efforts funded through the CEI to increase nonpartisan voter registration and mobilization in Boston low-income communities and communities of color with low rates of voter participation.

Evaluation Goals

1. To assess the impact of the grantee efforts on voter participation.
2. To identify the additional products of increased turnout.
3. To assess the effects of the CEI work on grantee organizations.

This is a completely voluntary activity – you are not obligated to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. If you have questions at any time during the conversation, please do not hesitate to stop me and ask for clarification.

Your interview is confidential. Responses will be combined along with other CEI participants as part of a report for the funders of the initiative.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Fine then let's begin.

Appendix C: Guide for Interviews of Grantees

Goals of CEI

1. If you were going to describe the goals of CEI to a constituent or colleague who knew nothing about it, what would you say?
2. What do the funders expect CEI grantees to achieve? (probe for how success would be measured) Do you think these are reasonable expectations? Were they communicated clearly from the onset (probe for how)?

Effect of CEI model (theory of change) on grantee organization

1. Was your organization involved in civic participation activities prior to the CEI? How important was this work to your organization before it became involved in the CEI (probe for level of integration of advocacy, voter registration, voter turnout, other political work in organization's work plan/ strategic focus)?
2. What did your organization have to do to prepare itself for the CEI? (Probe for ways it strengthened or strained capacity, created tension; e.g., hired organizers, shifted staff responsibilities, improved data collection systems, built upon other efforts, insufficient resources for added demand on staff time, staff burnout.)
3. What was your organization able to do for the first time or better, as a result of your participation in the CEI? (Probe for collaborations with non-CEI groups; different organizing strategies employed; increase resources.)
4. How effective was the CEI in providing opportunities for grantee collaboration? For information sharing among grantees?
5. How did these opportunities for collaboration and information sharing benefit your organization (probe for improvements in relations, challenges)?

Effectiveness of data collection system and technical support

1. Was the data collection program offered by the CEI useful (probe for value of information it provides, usefulness beyond CEI activities)?
2. Were there challenges in using the data collection program (probe for resource availability, training, ease of use, maintenance)?
3. How effective was the technical support provided (probe for availability, teaching new skills and techniques, providing one-on-one assistance, competence)?
4. Does your organization have a data base of the people you registered?
5. Does the data that you have collected enhance your ability to do other work (probe for examples of how they will use the data in the future, i.e., tenant organizing, public policy advocacy, parent involvement in schools, immigrant rights, etc)?

Impact on voter participation

1. Where exactly did you do your organizing work? (Probe for venue, e.g., shopping centers, malls, street festivals, etc.)
2. What type of organizing activities did you engage in (probe for specific techniques, i.e., house parties, mailings, door-to-door registration, information/registration tables at offices of other CBO's)?
3. What was the community response or reaction to your voter registration and mobilization efforts? (Probe for positive and negative responses from the community.)
4. What worked best and why?
5. What would you do differently?
6. What if any were the challenges you faced in voter registration efforts? In voter mobilization efforts? (Probe for how language differences were handled, literacy level.)
7. What effect or impact did your civic participation efforts have on the broader community? Has the perception of your organization changed (Probe for reputation among community residents, other organizations, politicians, media?)
8. Did other groups' efforts, separate from the CEI, have an effect on voter participation results in wards and precincts you were targeting (probe for how they enhanced or hindered CEI efforts; tensions or turf issues)? Did you collaborate with any of these other organizations? Will you continue to work with any of these organizations (probe for examples of continued work)?

Other outcomes

1. Did the issues that concern your constituency gain media attention because of your involvement with the CEI (probe for written large press coverage, e.g., Boston Globe, Herald v. community newspapers, and major networks v. neighborhood cable programming)?
2. Did your organizing efforts produce any surprising results? (Probe for good things that came from their work.)

Sustainability and expansion of civic participation

- Did the CEI prepare you to sustain your voter participation efforts?
- Is your organization involved in political work other than voter mobilization (probe for starting 501c4 organization)?
- If you were going to recommend changes to the CEI model, what would you want to see more of? What would you want less of? What assistance would you want to have?

Appendix D: Guide for Interviews of Technical Advisors

Effectiveness of CEI model

1. What did you understand your role as a technical advisor [organization?] to entail? [actual activities or tasks the advisors expected to perform]
2. What is your impression that the grantee organizations fully understood your role as a technical advisor? [probe for whether there were tensions regarding roles]
3. What systems/structures did you put in place to ensure that you performed your role effectively? [link these to activities/tasks in No. 1]
4. How much support did the grantee organizations require? Ask for? Receive? [Were there differences with different organizations?]
5. What long-term impacts (if any) did you have on the grantee organizations? [systems/structures/methods that advisors might have suggested and which grantee organizations institutionalized]
6. How successful/unsuccessful were your efforts? [Is the success of the technical advisors even measurable?]

Relationship to grantees

1. Did you have to modify your approach in working with organizations that focus on mobilizing low income communities and communities of color?
 - What was done differently?
 - Were there specific challenges?
 - Did you overcome these challenges?

Appendix E: Guide for Interviews of Non-CEI Organizations

Voter participation efforts

1. Have you worked collaboratively with any of the CEI grantees? What has your experience been with these organizations? (Probe for successful relations or problems; turf issues if targeting same wards and precincts)
2. How important are civic participation activities to your organizations overall mission (probe for type of work and length of time they have been doing this work)?
3. At what cost did your organization engage in these efforts? (Probe for ways it strengthened or strained capacity, created tension; e.g., hired organizers, shifted staff responsibilities, improved data collection systems, built upon other efforts, insufficient resources for added demand on staff time, staff burnout.)
4. Where exactly do you do your organizing work? (Probe for venue, e.g., shopping centers, malls, street festivals, door-to-door, etc.)
5. What has been the community response/ reaction to your efforts?
 - voter registration
 - voter mobilization
 - Participation in community forums
6. What works best and why?
7. What would you do differently?
8. What if any are the challenges you face in voter registration efforts? In voter mobilization efforts? (Probe for how language differences were handled, literacy level.)
9. Does your organization have a data base of the people you registered to vote? How do you use the data?
10. How have your community organizing and civic engagement efforts impacted your organization (probe for increased media attention, increased visibility / recognition among community residents, greater attention from elected officials)?

Sustainability and expansion of civic participation

1. What do you think is needed to sustain voter participation efforts?
2. How are your civic engagement efforts funded?

Appendix F: Comments on the Use of Control Precincts

MassVOTE used control precincts as a basis for measuring the effects of the CEI initiative. Control precincts were chosen within the same neighborhood, as designated by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, based on geographic, demographic, and competitive factors. The latter refers to the degree of candidate competition in each precinct.

MassVOTE's choice of precincts appears to be primarily based on geographic factors. This has the advantage of probable demographic and competitive similarities between the precincts, i.e., the same characteristic populations would live and candidates would run in adjacent areas of a neighborhood.

The control precincts tended to be situated in the same political units, thus meeting the competitiveness factor. The 35 precincts that CEI groups worked in were in the same City Council Districts as 46 of the 54 control precincts, an 85% overlap. The 13 State Representative districts of the CEI groups' precincts are a subset of the 15 State Representative districts of the control precincts. Again, there is significant overlap. Both target and control precincts would typically have the same candidates, obviating differences in candidate competitiveness.

Looking at demographic comparisons in the table below, it is evident that most precincts were quite comparable with a few that were less so.

Target and Control Precinct Demographics

	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Allston-Brighton CDC precincts	62.0%	7.2%	13.0%	13.4%
Allston-Brighton CDC control precincts	71.3%	3.3%	7.3%	14.3%
MA ACORN Codman Sq. precincts	3.5%	80.3%	7.6%	1.2%
MA ACORN Codman Sq. control precincts	20.2%	62.6%	7.2%	3.5%
Viet-AID precincts	30.2%	28.9%	9.7%	24.0%
Viet-AID control precincts	9.6%	55.1%	14.0%	5.1%
Project R.I.G.H.T. precincts	1.5%	72.9%	18.4%	0.4%
Project R.I.G.H.T. control precincts	5.4%	69.9%	18.1%	1.0%
MA ACORN Franklin Field precincts	5.1%	78.6%	9.9%	1.1%
MA ACORN Franklin Field control precincts	10.2%	70.2%	13.7%	1.1%
JP CEMV precincts	31.9%	23.2%	34.0%	7.6%
JP CEMV control precincts	32.7%	34.7%	22.4%	5.2%

Identifying ideal control precincts is constrained by many factors, however, and finding a match is difficult. For example, looking at the control precincts relevant to Allston-Brighton CDC (ABCDC), the precincts that ABCDC was funded to organize in tended to have a lower percentage of whites, and a higher percentage of Blacks and Latino voters than the control precincts (62% versus 71.3%, 7.2% v. 3.3%, and 13% v. 7.3%, respectively). In the Codman Square area, a similar observation can be made. Whites constituted 3.5% of the population in the areas that ACORN organized in and 20.2% of the population in the Codman Square control precincts. African Americans were correspondingly higher.

There were also difficulties finding precincts comparable to these with high concentrations of Asian Americans. For the Viet-AID area, a significant difference may exist between the mixed, Viet-AID targeted precincts and the predominantly African American Viet-AID control precincts. No control precincts are given for the Chinese Progressive Association's area, which is mainly Chinatown. This may reflect the reasonable assumption that it is difficult to find any other precincts with the same demographic mix as Chinatown. It would be useful to sample some precincts for socioeconomic status since higher socioeconomic status has been correlated with higher voter participation.

Another difficulty in using this method is that organizing in the target precincts in one part of the neighborhood may have a halo effect on control precincts in other parts of the neighborhood. Thus, CEI organization activities would affect both voter registration and turnout in control precincts.

One way to enhance this method of using control precincts to estimate impact is to identify a smaller number of precincts that more closely matches the target precincts. For example, Allston-Brighton CDC's four precincts are compared to eleven other precincts in Allston. However by focusing on just three of the neighborhood's precincts, 21-4, 21-5, and 21-8, one could find precincts that more closely match the target precincts and are closer in aggregate size to the target precincts. With control precincts selected in this way, the results would differ somewhat from the comparison utilizing eleven control precincts, i.e., the control precincts' change in voter registration and turnout would improve. Similarly, one could also find a better demographic match in the Codman Square neighborhood by at least omitting precinct 17-4. That precinct has a markedly lower concentration of people of color. Looking at problem areas like the Viet-AID precincts, a somewhat better demographic match would be achieved using one or two precincts, although the significant differences mentioned above would still remain.

Another alternative obviously is to choose precincts outside the neighborhood, but that introduces other issues. The competitiveness factor, which is difficult to measure, may be hard to match. On the other hand, an advantage is that there would be less "halo" effect from CEI organizing elsewhere in the neighborhood affecting the control precincts.

All in all, MassVOTE's control precincts were an effective tool to help address the knotty problem of measuring the indirect impact of the CEI's efforts in their target precincts. There are, however, some alternative methods of choosing control precincts, particularly using a smaller number of precincts in some neighborhood to create a better fit with the target precincts, which could strengthen understanding of the effectiveness of CEI efforts.



The Institute for Asian American Studies (IAAS) at the University of Massachusetts Boston was established in 1993 with the support from Asian American communities and direction from the State Legislature. The IAAS utilizes resources and expertise from the University and community to conduct research on Asian Americans; to strengthen and further Asian American involvement in political, economic, social, and cultural life; and to improve opportunities and campus life for Asian American faculty, staff, and students and for those interested in Asian Americans.

The Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy (Gaston) at the University of Massachusetts Boston was established in 1989 through the initiative of Latino community activists, academicians, and by the Massachusetts State Legislature in response to a need for improved understanding of Latino experiences and living conditions in Massachusetts. The mission of the institute is to inform policy makers about issues vital to the Commonwealth's growing Latino community and providing this community with information and analysis necessary for effective participation in public policy development.

The William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture (Trotter) was founded in 1984 through a collaborative effort of the University of Massachusetts Boston and the Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus. The institute's mission is to address the issues facing the Black Community in Massachusetts through research and publication, technical assistance and public service.